

Message Text

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51

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CU-02 HEW-02 EB-07 SCS-03 FBO-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

SCCT-01 AID-05 CCO-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSC-05

SP-02 OC-05 OPR-02 PA-01 USSS-00 PRS-01 SCA-01 A-01

OMB-01 SS-15 SY-05 (ISO) W
----- 110553

P R 201245Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5203

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT LOUIS 0387

PRETORIA FOR AMBASSADOR MANHARD

LONDON FOR HAVERKAMP

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, MP

SUBJECT: STUDENT STRIKES

REF: PORT LOUIS 380 (NOTAL)

1. MOST SCHOOLS CLOSED MAY 20 AND THOUSANDS OF STUDENTS
DEMONSTRATED IN PORT LOUIS AND OTHER URBAN CENTERS OF THE ISLAND
THROUGHOUT DAY. THE FIRST STUDENTS MARCHED IN ORDERLY FASHION,
EASILY CONTROLLED BY A FEW UNIFORMED POLICEMEN WHO DIRECTED
THE CROWDS AWAY FROM THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND GOVERNMENT
HOUSE. BY MID-AFTERNOON TONE OF DEMONSTRATIONS BECAME MORE
UGLY. STUDENTS ATTEMPTED BREAK THROUGH POLICE LINES AT ASSEMBLY
BUILDING IN FRONT OF EMBASSY AND POLICE WERE SUPPLEMENTED BY
SPECIAL RIOT UNITS WITH PROTECTIVE HELMETS, BATONS AND WICKER
SHIELDS. MAJOR FOUR-LANE HIGHWAY LEAVING PORT LOUIS WAS BLOCKED
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FOR SOMETIME. POLICE REPORTEDLY USED TEAR GAS NEAR GOVERNMENT

HOUSE AND IN PORT LOUIS SUBURB OF ROSE HILL.

2. CONSERVATIVE DAILY LE CERNEEN, WHICH COMPARES DEMONSTRATIONS WITH MAY 1968 RIOTS IN PARIS, THIS MORNING CARRIED EXTRACTS FROM A TRACT THAT IS ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN CIRCULATED TO THE STUDENTS. IT REPORTEDLY CALLS FOR "RADICAL CHANGE IN THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY AND THE MAURITIAN ECONOMY" AS WELL AS REFORM OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM. DEPARTMENT OF CROWD SUPPORTS BELIEF THAT RADICALS OF MMM ARE AGITATING STUDENTS. FIRST SLOGANS WERE SHOUTED AGAINST MINISTER OF EDUCATION CHAPERON CALLING HIM "THIEF" AND "VAMPIRE". MORE MILITANT OLDER STUDENTS THEN TOOK LEADERSHIP AND ATTEMPTED BREAK POLICE RANKS. LATTER GROUPS CHANTED SLOGAN "HUMANITE".

3. DEMONSTRATIONS OF THIS MAGNITUDE AND POTENTIAL VIOLENCE VERY UNUSUAL FOR MAURITIUS. IN FACT, THIS IS FIRST STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS IN MEMORY. MAJORITY OF STUDENTS STILL SEEM TO TAKE DEMONSTRATIONS AS A LARK AND POLICE HAVE REFRAINED FROM STRONG ARM TACTICS. WE HAVE SEEN NO VANDALISM SO FAR. HOWEVER, TROUBLES MAY CONTINUE TO SOME EXTENT FOR NEXT FEW DAYS.
HEATLEY

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NNN

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